

Les Orchestrations de Xavier

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We speak to renowned French-born visual artist Xavier Veilhan days before his recent solo show at Andréhn-Schiptjenko in Stockholm at the end of last year. Monsieur Veilhan, an affable gent charmingly speaking in musical allegories and metaphors, speaks of his love for music and his peers and recent ventures into the medium of film.



C-P: You've had a long-standing relationship with Andréhn-Schiptjenko in Stockholm, exhibiting with the gallery already back in the early '90s and now you're here with your studio crew, presenting a new show.

X.V: I really like it here and as you say, I have a very long relationship with Cilène (Andréhn) and Marina (Schiptjenko). I met them in 1991 and did my first solo show with the gallery in 1993. Not starting out in France seemed like a good thing to me, especially since the art I'm doing I feel is not particularly bound by language. Here with the gallery I feel very comfortable doing some more experimental work. And they push and encourage me to try my ways doing new things, even such that might not be so easy to sell.

C-P: Your new show, *Cedar*, revolves around a cedar tree that has been cut into pieces by the trunk that are placed on shelves around the gallery walls. There's an intrinsic time element borne and manifested by the tree itself and I understand the show is an examination of the relationship between time, distance, space and object.

X.V: Yes, and as well an examination of the ranges of time; the range of time of the tree itself which is fifty years and then there's the range of time spent at the gallery viewing the show where essentially it doesn't matter how long you actually stay. You can stay a very short while and still get a good glimpse of the tree and presentation or stay longer time and possibly arrive at a different approach to the show in the end. There's a linear time aspect where the tree pieces are presented in chronological sequential order beginning with the pieces from the bottom all the way through to highest part.



C-P: While it might not appear obvious at first sight, I gather there is a connection between the presentation of the tree and your past sculptural work in so far time is concerned. That brings me to another memorable show (*Music*) that you did in 2015 spread across two venues, in NYC and Paris, with Galerie Perrotin, making for a homage to great music producers in modern time.

X.V: Even if my art is very visual and not based on language, rather visual language, it relies much on ideas. I'm very keen on developing ideas and finding the best shape for them to become tangible. The root of the works is always conceptual, be it an allegory of music or a way to represent time.

C-P: Yes, and for instance a number of influential people from Pharrell Williams and the guys from Daft Punk to Giorgio Moroder who recently had a major revival emerging again on people's lips, were depicted in your sculptures at Perrotin. That was an interesting time stretch between the very current and contemporary and the influence from yesteryear which got me wondering about your own relationship to music, as a consumer and recipient. Are these people you have had a personal link to or whom possibly have influenced you in one way or another?

X.V: Well the show was very personal and also approaching music through the notion of producers instead of artists was also a statement. One of the ideas was to highlight people in music who do not appear in the front line but are influential in so far they are really the ones creating the songs that we all listen to and are immersed by. Some of the people represented like Pharrell and Neptunes are also musicians but most of them are not visible, and in life art is generally about putting something that isn't visible into the visible field.

What was interesting with Daft Punk was that I asked them to pose for me without the masks since they were being represented not as artists but as producers. I'm fascinated by music because of its physical quality and the way it moves things in a way I cannot do with my art that is visual. I've made collaborations on performances with musicians to combine the visual efficiency of my work with sound matter and sound impact of others.

